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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/942,620	08/31/2001	Katsutoshi Nakamura	213546US2	8765
22850	7590	01/04/2005	EXAMINER	
OBLON, SPIVAK, MCCLELLAND, MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C. 1940 DUKE STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314			SHINGLES, KRISTIE D	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2141	

DATE MAILED: 01/04/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/942,620

Applicant(s)

NAKAMURA ET AL.

Examiner

Kristie Shingles

Art Unit

2141

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 31 August 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-15 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 31 August 2001 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-15 are pending.

Priority

1. Acknowledgment is made of applicant's claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d). The certified copy has been filed in parent Application No. JP 2000-262908 filed on 8/31/2000.

Drawings

2. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(5) because they do not include the following reference sign(s) mentioned in the description: 46. Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement-drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Art Unit: 2141

3. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 CFR 1.84(p)(4) because reference character “45” has been used to designate both “Product Approval” (Fig.8) and “the request selector” (Fig.9). Corrected drawing sheets in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. Any amended replacement-drawing sheet should include all of the figures appearing on the immediate prior version of the sheet, even if only one figure is being amended. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled “Replacement Sheet” in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101

4. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

5. Claim 14 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. The claim is directed to software (i.e., a computer program), which renders it non-statutory, unless implemented on a computer readable medium.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

6. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless --

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

7. Claims 1-15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by *Athavale et al* (USPN 6,539,386).

a. **Per claim 1**, *Athavale et al* teach a method executed in an apparatus to which at least one terminal is capable of accessing via a network, comprising the steps of:

- forming an electronic bulletin board for disclosing product information relevant to a product to be readable via said network from a terminal that is operated by a salesperson who sells said product (**Abstract, Figures 3 and 5, Col.3 Lines 8-24, Col.3 Line 55-Col.4 Line 21 and Col.8 Line 56-Col.9 Line 15; customer's order entry application and feedback object achieve functionality of bulletin board, where product information from the provider is displayed to the customer for review**);
- receiving a request to register or change said product information, which is sent from a terminal that is operated by a person who wishes to disclose information on said electronic bulletin board via said network (**Abstract, Figure 4, Col.3 Lines 25-54, Col.4 Lines 29-63, Col.5 Line 19-Col.6 Line 20 and Col.8 Line 56-Col.9 Line 15; the change order engine of the network commerce server receives the change order request from the customer via the network**); and
- limiting the disclosing of product information, which is pursuant to the request, until approval of the received request is obtained from an information manager (**Abstract, Col.3 Lines 25-35, Col.4 Lines 37-46, Col.13 Lines 7-17 and Col.15 Lines 16-32; the change order engine places a hold on the current order, once a confirmation/approval of the change order is received over the network, then the hold is removed to enable fulfilling the modified order**).

b. **Claims 10-12 and 14** contain limitations that are substantially similar to the limitations of claim 1 and are therefore rejected under the same basis.

c. **Per claim 15, *Athavale et al* teach the computer program according to claim 14, wherein the computer program is stored in a computer readable storage medium (Col.5 Line 19-Col.6 Line 20 and Col.10 Lines 42-60).**

d. **Per claim 2, *Athavale et al* teach the method according to claim 1, wherein said limiting step comprises a substep of replacing an entirety or a part of said requested product information with other information to be disclosed on said electronic bulletin board until approval of the received request is obtained from the information manager (Col.3 Lines 25-54, Col.5 Lines 11-60, Col.6 Lines 1-14 and Col.32-65; the change order engine places a hold on the current order due to any changes and modifications made to the current order—modifications imply changes which comprise the replacement, deletion, and addition of data).**

e. **Per claim 3, *Athavale et al* teach the method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of preregistering introduction information for introducing said person who wishes to disclose information in a preset recording area, and disclosing said introduction information on said electronic bulletin board with product information, which is pursuant to the request, on the precondition that approval is obtained from said information manager (Col.8 Lines 23-56, Col.10 Lines 33-41 and Col.11 Line 49-Col.12 Line 32; preregistering introduction information may be realized through the implementation of the authorization process, wherein an evaluator provides authorization for the customer making the order**

Art Unit: 2141

changes—the initial evaluator determines if the customer is authorized only then are the changes deemed valid, updated customer order information is then displayed).

f. **Claim 4** is substantially similar to claim 3 and is therefore rejected under the same basis.

g. **Per claim 5, *Athavale et al* teach the method according to claim 1, wherein said request receiving step comprises a substep of informing said person who wishes to disclose information of identifying information for identifying said person, and receiving only the request with said identifying information (Col.7 Lines 1-14 and Col.11 Lines 21-62; customer authorization is based on the identification of the user/customer which is implicitly included in order information specific to the customer and correspondence/feedback directed to that specific customer).**

h. **Per claim 6, *Athavale et al* teach the method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of presenting an input screen page for urging registration or change product information to the terminal that is operated by the person who requests the disclosing of information on said electronic bulletin board, whereby constructing an environment in which said person who wishes to disclose information is capable of making said request through said input screen page (Abstract, Figures 2, 4 and 5, Col.2 Lines 57-67 and Col.9 Lines 32-65; the order entry application suffices as the input screen page wherein the customer interfaces with the system to change product information or to query the status of an existing order).**

i. **Per claim 7, *Athavale et al* teach the method according to claim 6, wherein said product information is classified into a plurality of groups, and said presenting step comprises a substep of presenting classification items for specifying the information groups on said input**

Art Unit: 2141

screen page, whereby making it possible for said person who wishes to disclose information to select a desired information group through the classification items on the input screen page and to make said request (Col.12 Lines 54-62 and Col.15 Line 2-Col.16 Line 20; **product information is grouped on the order application, whereas the customer can modify the information based on its current status and whether it is an item that's allowed to be changed in the order**).

j. **Per claim 8, *Athavale et al* teach the method according to claim 7, wherein said information manager is fixed for each classification item, said request receiving step comprises a substep of, when said request of an arbitrary classification item is made, recognizing the request by the information manager corresponding to the classification item, and said limiting step comprises a substep of receiving approval or disapproval that said corresponding information manager issues after checking said request (Figure 5, Col.11 Lines 49-65 and Col.12 Line 44-Col.13 Line 17; the arbitrary classification item is realized with the order entry tables and fields of the order entry application, whereas, the ordering application determines the changes made to the various components/items of the order and approval of the changes removes the holding/limiting step from processing the order, if disapproval, then the changes are abandoned).**

k. **Per claim 9, *Athavale et al* teach the method according to claim 1, said limiting step comprises a substep of receiving approval or disapproval that said corresponding information manager issues after checking said request, and sending the received approval or disapproval via said network to said terminal that is operated by a person who wishes to disclose information on said electronic bulletin board (Abstract, Figure 4, Col.3 Lines 25-35, Col.4**

Art Unit: 2141

Lines 37-46, Col.13 Lines 7-17 and Col.16 Lines 8-20; the change order engine places a hold on the current order, once a confirmation/approval of the change order is received over the network, then the hold is removed to enable fulfilling the modified order and a confirmation of the order is sent to the customer).

1. **Per claim 13, *Athavale et al* teach the system according to claim 12, wherein said electronic bulletin board includes an area for providing product information relevant to a product to a salesperson who wishes to sell said product, and said receiving means receives said request to register or change object information relevant to said product (Col.8 Line 61-Col.9 Line 15, Col.11 Lines 22-47 and Col.12 Lines 4-13; a sales representative may use the exceptions system to evaluate the received change order requests and to make appropriate changes to the order).**

Conclusion

8. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

- a. *Arnold et al* (USPN 6,016,504) disclose a method and system for tracking the purchase of a product and services over the Internet.
- b. *Foster et al* (USPN 4,897,867) disclose a method of an arrangement for forwarding a customer order.
- c. *Simmons* (USPN 5,974,451) discloses a system and method for distributing bulletins to external computers accessing wide area computer networks.
- d. *Sloo* (USPN 5,668,953) discloses a method and apparatus for handling a complaint.

Art Unit: 2141

- e. *Kikugawa* (USPN 6,438,632) discloses an electronic bulletin board system.
 - f. *Maurille* (USPN 6,484,196) discloses an Internet messaging system and method for use in computer networks.
 - g. *Sandhu et al* (USPN 6,347,307) disclose a system and method for conducting web-based financial transactions in capital markets.
 - h. *Sanderman* (USPN 5,794,006) discloses a system and method for editing content in an online network.
 - i. *Sunaga et al* (USPN 6,094,675) disclose an electronic discussion system for exchanging information among users.
9. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kristie Shingles whose telephone number is 571-272-3888. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 8:30-6:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Rupal Dharia can be reached on 571-272-3880. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.


Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Kristie Shingles
Examiner
Art Unit 2141

Application/Control Number: 09/942,620
Art Unit: 2141

Page 10

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SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER